



Boylston Street Corridor

PUBLIC FORUM * JUNE 2, 2021

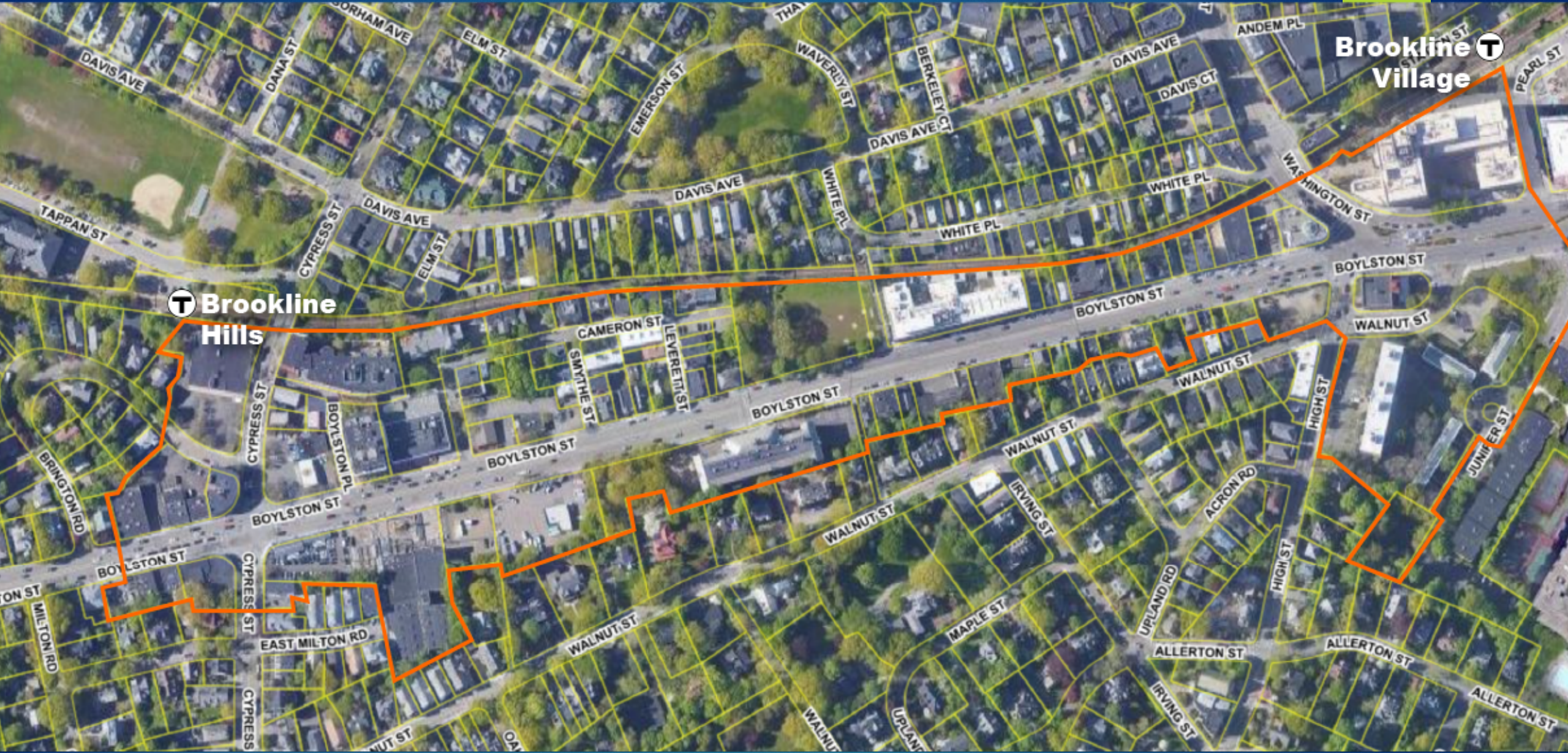
Agenda

- ▶ Background Information
- ▶ Initial Findings
- ▶ Potential Recommendations
- ▶ Implementation Timeline
- ▶ Wrap-Up

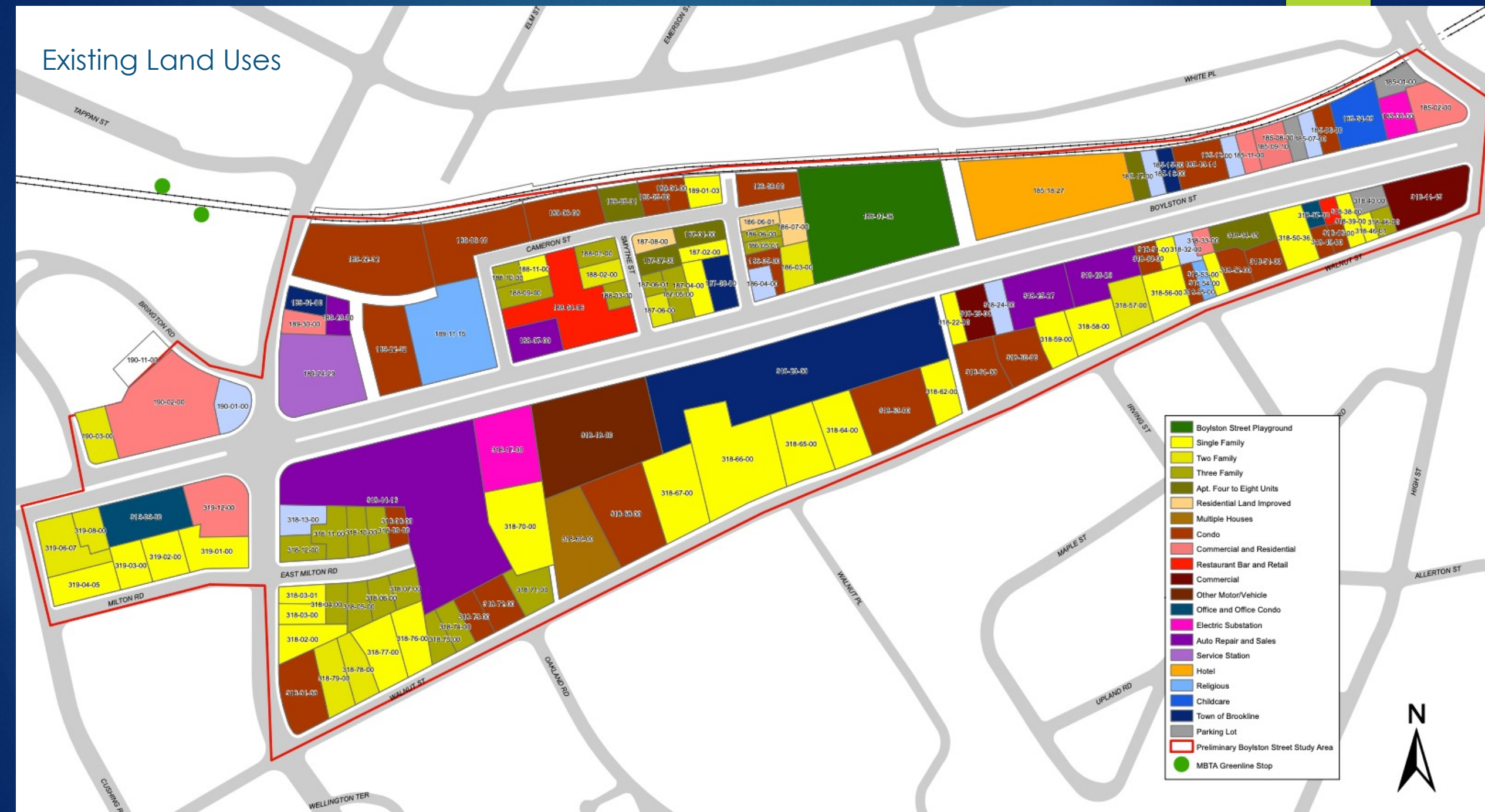
How to Participate Tonight

- ▶ Chat Feature
- ▶ Q&A Feature
- ▶ Announced times for Public Comment -> Raise your hand Feature
- ▶ Google Jamboard

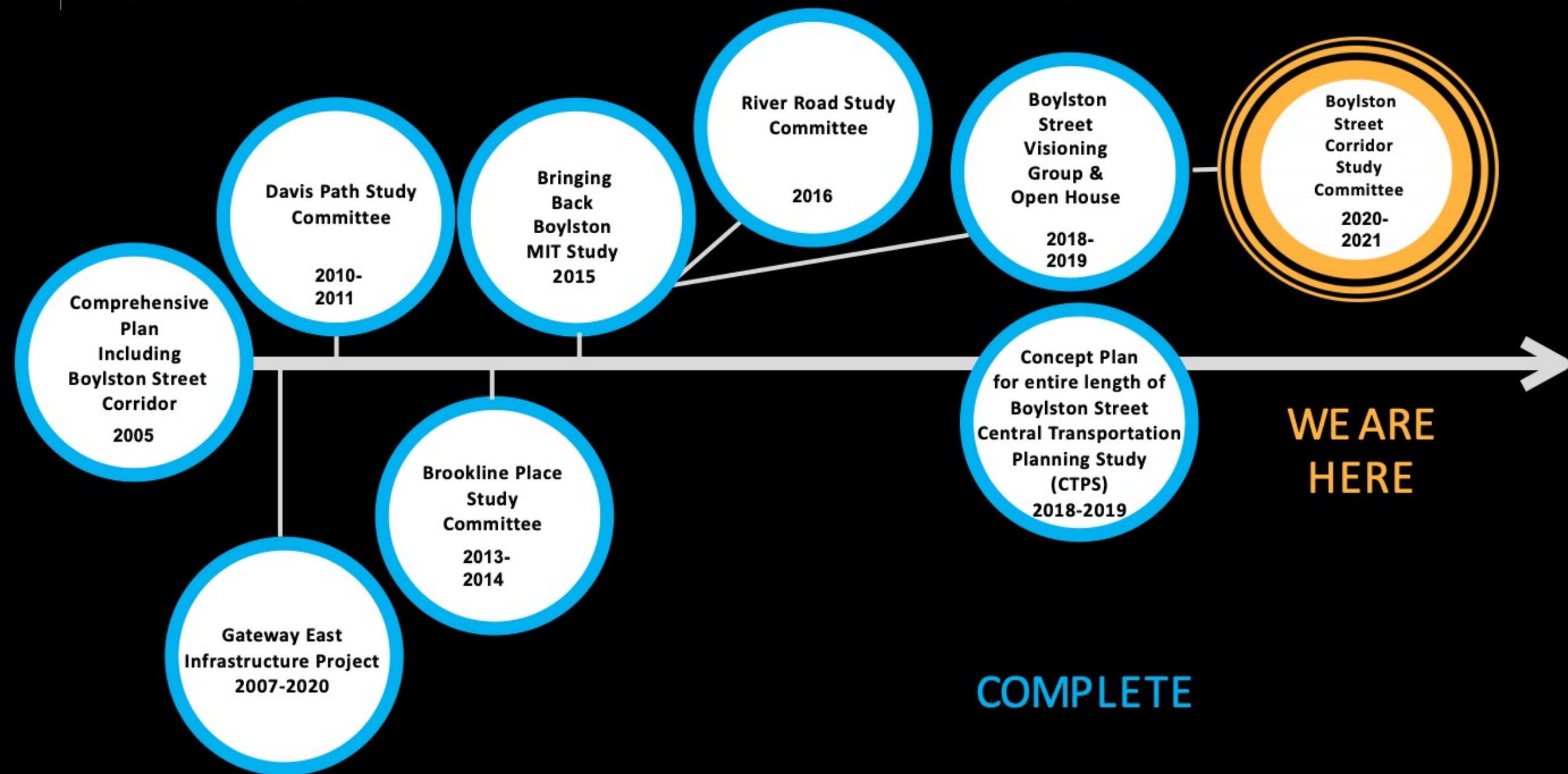
Background Information



Existing Land Uses



BOYLSTON STREET TRANSFORMATION TIMELINE



Boylston Visioning

- ▶ Utilize Form-based Zoning
- ▶ Promote uses that are economically viable and that contribute beneficially to the local community
- ▶ Support existing small businesses, while engaging in strategies to add new businesses where viable and there is a need
- ▶ Seek to achieve the goals outlined in the Town's Climate Action Plan by encouraging sustainable design and infrastructure
- ▶ Wherever feasible, employ innovative strategies to manage demand for parking
- ▶ Reduce traffic speeds and unsafe bike and pedestrian conditions along Boylston Street

Select Board Direction to Committee

- ▶ In addition to Visioning conclusions:
 - ▶ Increase housing
 - ▶ Create opportunities for new businesses and other uses in the corridor, especially ones that provide a “third” social surrounding opportunity (i.e., third to home and work)
 - ▶ Increase daytime population presence along the corridor (employees, customers)
 - ▶ Strategies to incentivize business ownership by minority groups underrepresented in Brookline, women, and/or members of the LGBTQ community
 - ▶ Growth of commercial property taxes

Initial Findings

Survey Results:

Participant Demographics

- ▶ 424 responses, skewed towards older homeowners
- ▶ Locals access corridor mostly on foot

Age	#	%	Region
18-34	35	8%	40%
35-49	130	55%	45%
50-61	103	25%	14%
>61	151	36%	16%

Rent vs' Own	#	%	Region
Own	248	58%	44.1
Rent (Market Rate)	54	13%	55.9
Rent (Subsidized)	6	1%	

Affiliation	#	%
Corridor Resident	347	81.8
Business	17	4.0
Other Brk resident	26	6.1

Survey Results: Current Strengths & Weaknesses of the Corridor

Strengths:

- ✓ Access to the Brookline Village, public transportation and the larger Boston area, as well as the mix of local businesses.
- ✓ Commercial potential (business owners)

Weaknesses:

- ✓ Traffic, traffic noise and the 'highway-like feel' of Boylston St.
- ✓ Poor pedestrian accommodations, such as sidewalk width and connections across Boylston St.
- ✓ Removal of Davis Street Footbridge.
- ✓ Lack of appealing, small, locally owned businesses.

Survey Results:

Housing Development Goals

- ▶ Development priorities for stakeholders include mixed-use development, environmental sustainability, maintenance of current housing stock and development of affordable housing.
- ▶ Less concern about the types of housing available (senior vs' rentals vs' owner occupied)

GOALS	Corr Res	Business	Other residents	Total	Total Count
Focus on mixed-use development in the corridor	59%	71%	58%	58%	247
Build more environmentally sustainable housing	49%	59%	39%	48%	204
Work to preserve and maintain the existing housing	42%	29%	31%	41%	172
Provide more affordable housing	41%	53%	39%	40%	171
Develop workforce housing to attract more middle-income workers	26%	47%	46%	27%	115

Survey Results: Recreational Development Goals

- All stakeholders concerned with increasing and improving pedestrian access and safety, open spaces and tree cover.

GOALS	Corridor Res	Business	Other residents	Total	Total Count
Improve and develop the current system of walking paths such as the Walnut Street Path and Davis Path Footbridge	80%	71%	77%	77%	327
Improvements at current open spaces such as Boylston Street Playground	73%	47%	65%	70%	296
Develop more public spaces and open spaces such as pocket parks	61%	53%	54%	59%	250
Encourage retention of privately owned tree canopy	58%	59%	73%	58%	246

Survey Results: Neighborhood 'Character'

- ▶ Business owners prioritize beautification, parking and mixed-use development.
- ▶ Local residents less interested in maintaining the current character and mixture of developments in the corridor (fewer than 50% selected any of the other items).

GOALS	Corr Res	Business	Other residents	Total	Total Count
Provide more beautification projects such as trees and other amenities in the corridor	54%	71%	62%	54%	229
Better parking and pedestrian access for businesses	38%	71%	50%	40%	169
Maintain current neighborhood character and mix of businesses, commercial and institutional uses	33%	59%	12%	32%	136
Promote for mixed-use development in the corridor	33%	65%	31%	34%	145

Survey Results: Transportation Goals

GOALS	Corr Res	Businesses	Other residents	Total	Total #
Improve the pedestrian environment on Boylston Street such as increased crosswalks and large sidewalks	75%	77%	62%	73%	311
Tree Planting and Streetscape	67%	59%	62%	66%	278
Improve pedestrian pathway development such as the Walnut Path and Davis Path Footbridge	61%	65%	58%	60%	256
Improve bicycle access	48%	47%	39%	48%	205
Improve traffic conditions to increase safety on side streets	47%	35%	42%	46%	194
Improve traffic flow on Boylston Street	40%	47%	35%	40%	168
Explore shared parking developments such as parking garages	29%	53%	46%	31%	131
Add additional public transit options	22%	29%	35%	24	100
Preserve on street parking on Boylston Street	21%	35%	27	22%	92
Remove on street parking on Boylston Street	20%	18%	23%	20%	85
TOTAL	347	17	26	-	424

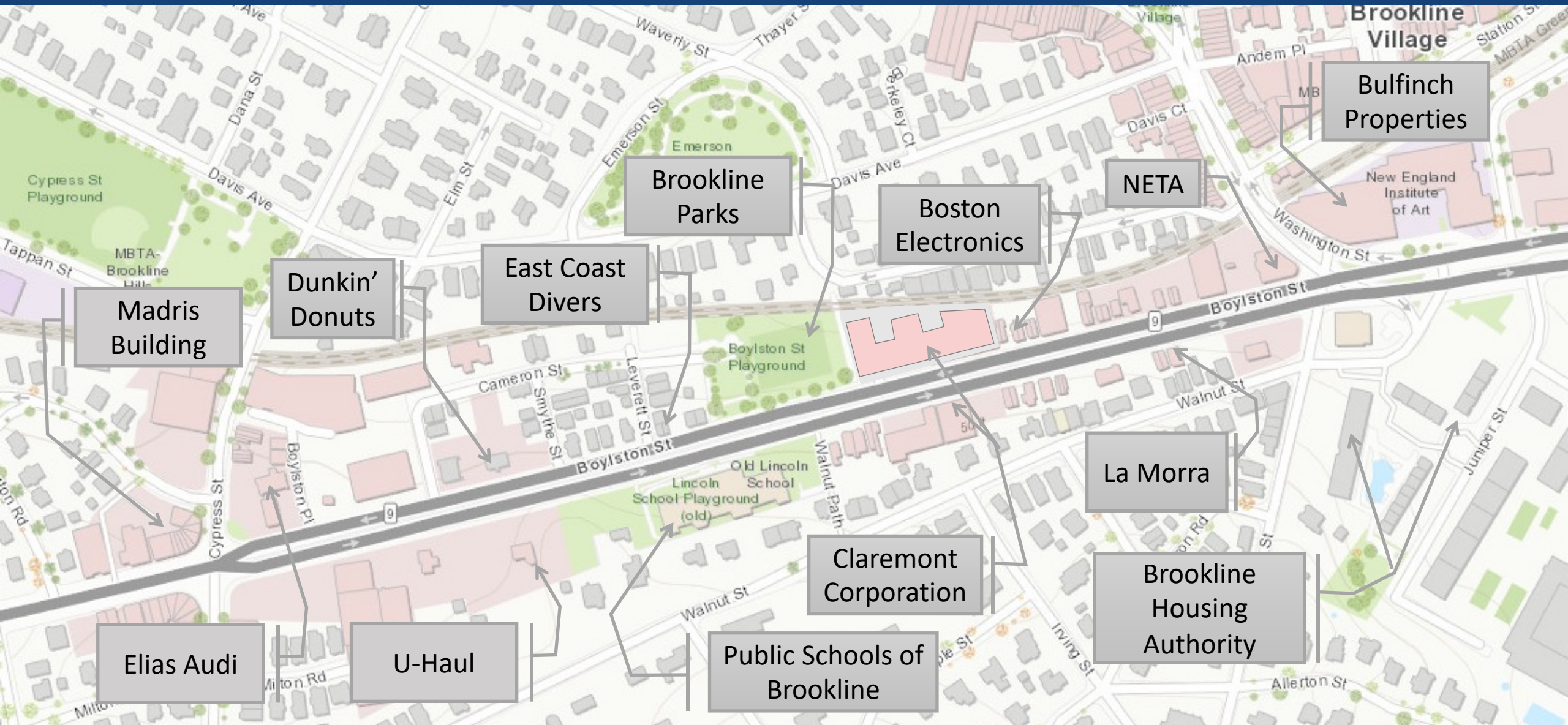
- Improving the pedestrian environment, such as easy access on foot and wider sidewalks, is the most common goal amongst residents and businesses.
- Improving traffic conditions & flow is less important than improving non-motorized access.
- Business owners more concerned with parking than are residents

Survey Results: Davis St Footbridge

- ▶ **83% of all respondents said it was important that the Footbridge be rebuilt**

	Corridor residents
Used DFB	71%
Did not use DFB	17%
Unaware of DFB	12%
Total #	314

Non-residential Interviews



RESPONSES FROM NON-RESIDENTIAL INTERVIEWS

- ▶ No immediate plans to change their own property significantly beyond renovation work in next 3-4 years
- ▶ Interested in outcome of this Committee's work, desire to continue participating in process, interested in change in the corridor

FUTURE USES IN CORRIDOR

- ▶ Don't see retail businesses as viable other than at Cypress or Washington/High corners
- ▶ Strongly support more residential in the corridor
- ▶ Likely viable ground floor uses could include specialty services and classes (e.g., scuba shop, specialty electronics, specialty instrument making)
- ▶ See this area as a great place to remain, have seen customer traffic and property values increase notably after Homewood Suites opened

PARKING & TRAFFIC

- ▶ Interest in increasing parking availability for customers and employees
- ▶ Open to parking being provided off-street in public or privately owned areas
- ▶ Existing traffic conditions (pre-COVID) experience is bumper to bumper until dinner hours; concern about additional changes that would further increase traffic
- ▶ Parking and traffic conditions have been greatly relieved during COVID and NETA appointment only (difficult to discern the difference right now)
- ▶ Parking and traffic diversions from development, school use at Old Lincoln School, and utility work are always a surprise that disrupt their business operations
- ▶ Frustrated by Town's limited control over this section of Boylston Street (design, parking management)

Constraints & Opportunities

CONSTRAINTS

- ▶ Small sites in part of the corridor
- ▶ Heavy traffic on Boylston Street
- ▶ Limited roadway cross section under MassDOT control
- ▶ Narrow sidewalks
- ▶ Missing footbridge over the MBTA tracks
- ▶ Incompatible uses without incentive to change

OPPORTUNITIES

- ▶ Desire to see improvements
- ▶ To transform the entire corridor through redesign of the highway into a street
- ▶ Stronger market for development here
- ▶ Interest in building affordable housing
- ▶ Proximity to transit
- ▶ A few larger sites
- ▶ Old Lincoln School could be more utilized as a community asset
- ▶ Heat Island Mitigation

Potential Recommendations



Preserve



Enhance



Enhance



Enhance

Pause for
public
comment

How to Participate Tonight

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Transform Strategies: Public Infrastructure

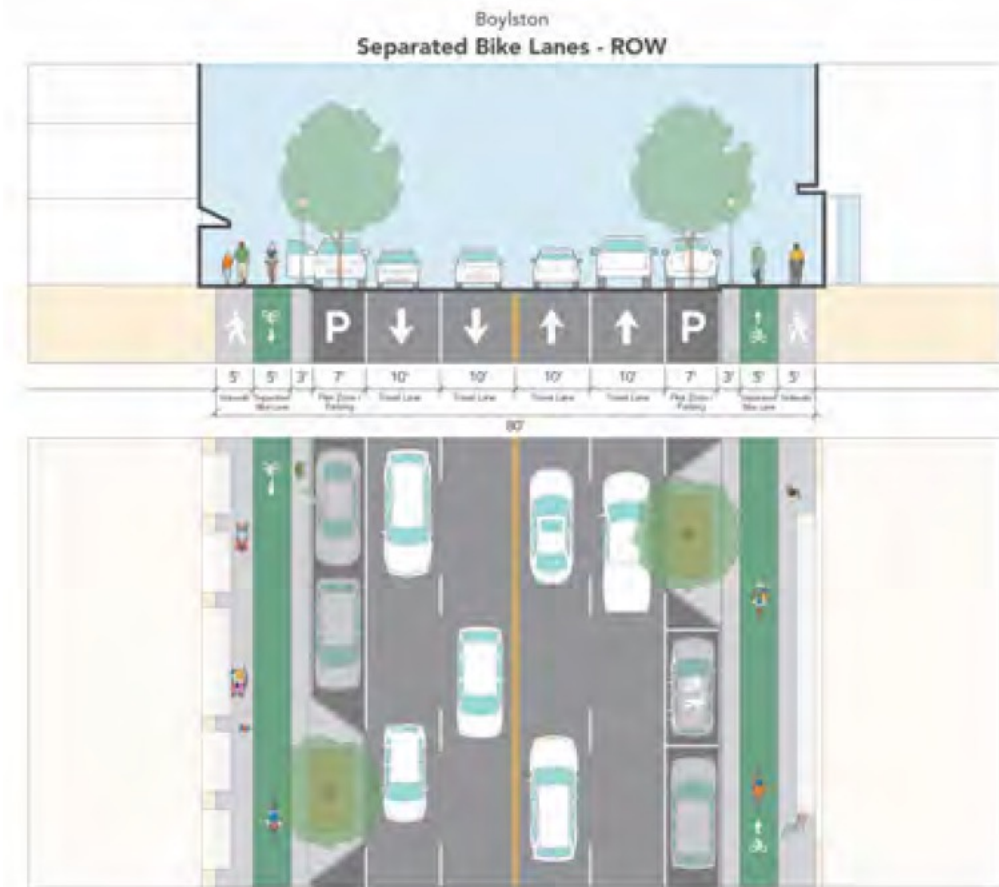
Boylston Street Complete Street design

- Widen existing shoulder into an intermittent parking lane
- Add bicycle lane
- Narrow travel lanes where possible
- Remove highway median
- Replace highway-style cobra lighting with pedestrian scale lighting

Improved pedestrian crossings; consider widened pedestrian zone at Old Lincoln School for better north-south link between Walnut Street and Emerson Garden

Support DPW's initiative to replace Davis Path Footbridge and redesign process for Boylston Street playground

Add publicly-accessible open space with preserved tree canopy



Transform Strategies: Private Properties

- ▶ Disincentivize continuation of auto-related properties in the corridor
- ▶ Identify key sites where additional housing and commercial development could be sited
- ▶ Widen setbacks along Boylston Street to support modified streetscape
- ▶ Add tree canopy and open space

Opportunities to add Significant Housing or Commercial Development

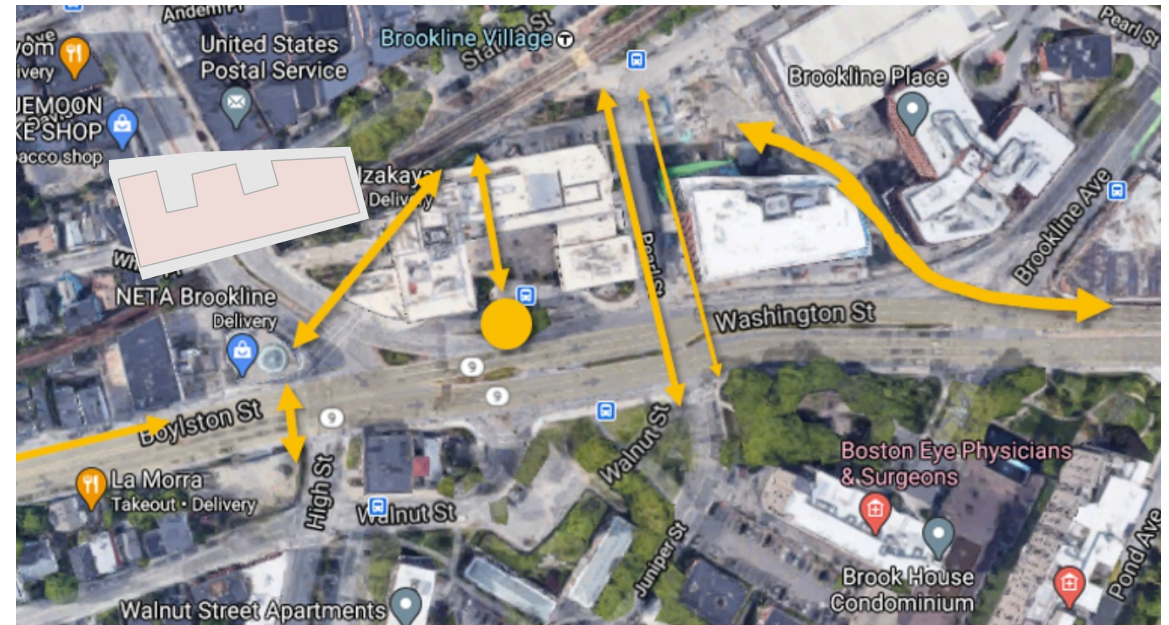


Opportunities to add Significant Housing or Commercial Development



Initial Recommendations regarding 10 Brookline Place

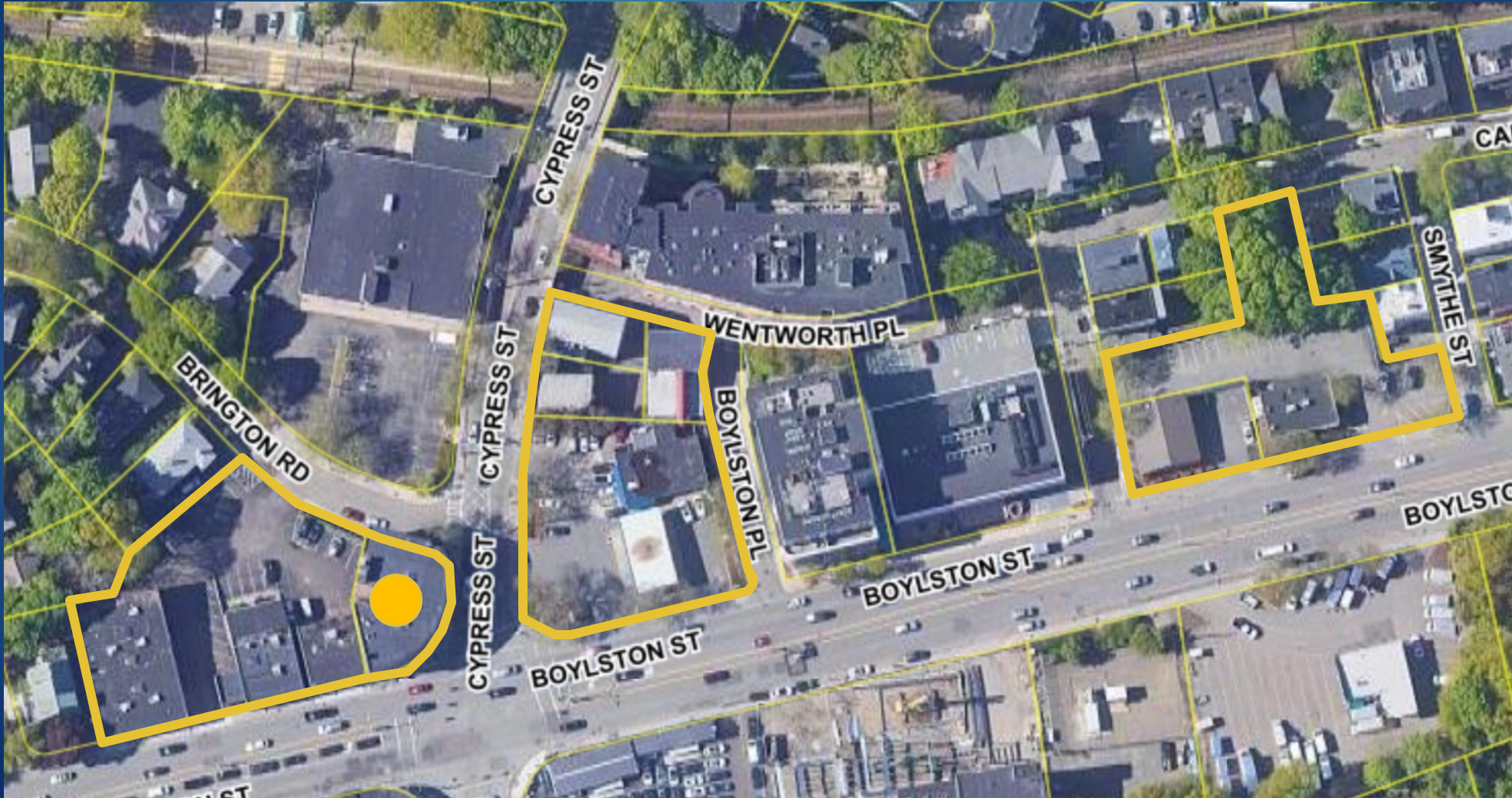
- ▶ If redevelopment occurs...
 - ▶ Pedestrian connections, especially through the site to the Brookline Village T-stop.
 - ▶ Double layer of street trees along the entire length of Washington Street
 - ▶ Improve the form and function of the existing bus stop on Washington Street
 - ▶ Visually connecting the site with the heart of Brookline Village with a major public entrance facing to the northwest



Opportunities to add Significant Housing or Commercial Development



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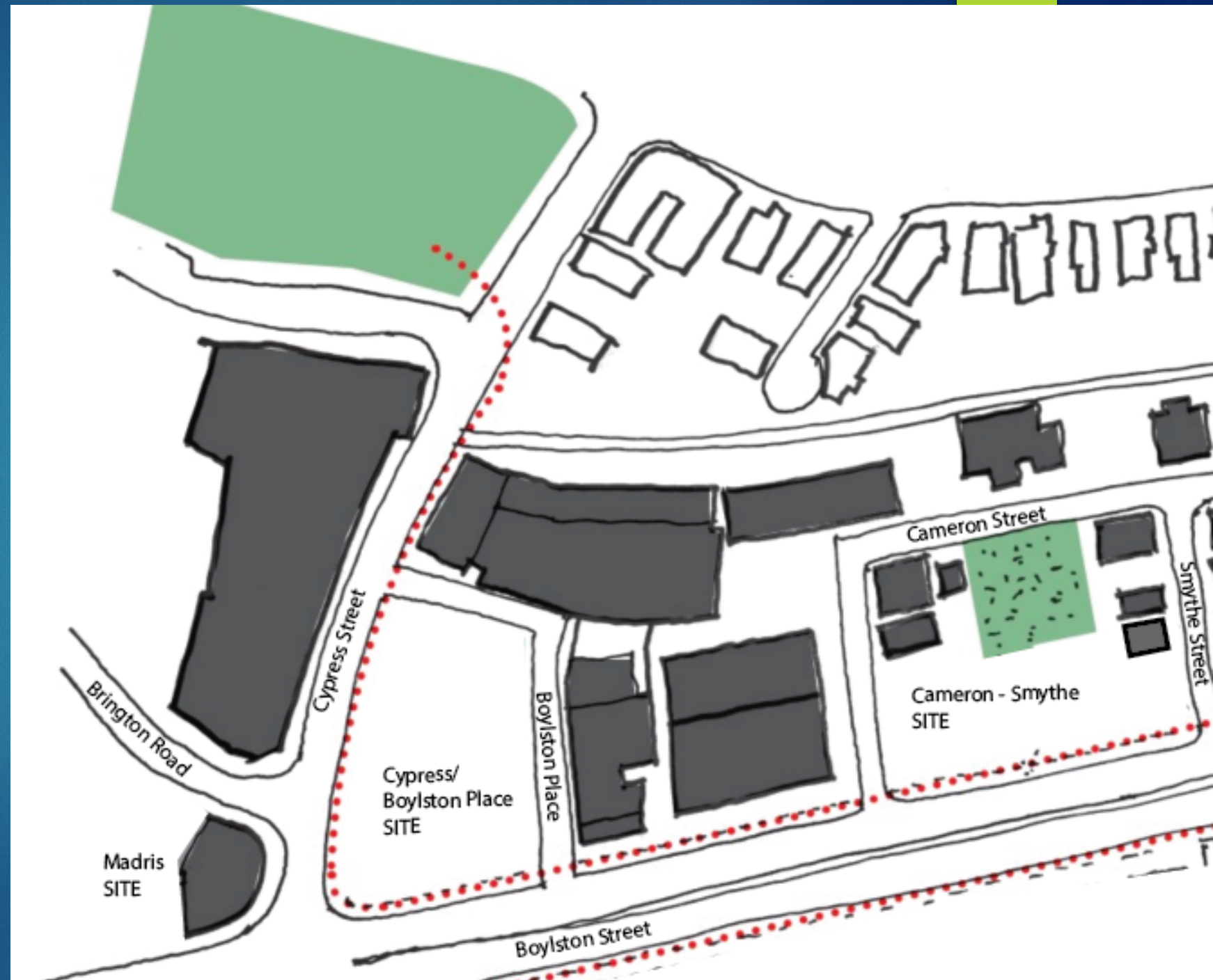
Madris Site to Smythe St.

- Significant setbacks (up to 25' from curb) along Cypress Street



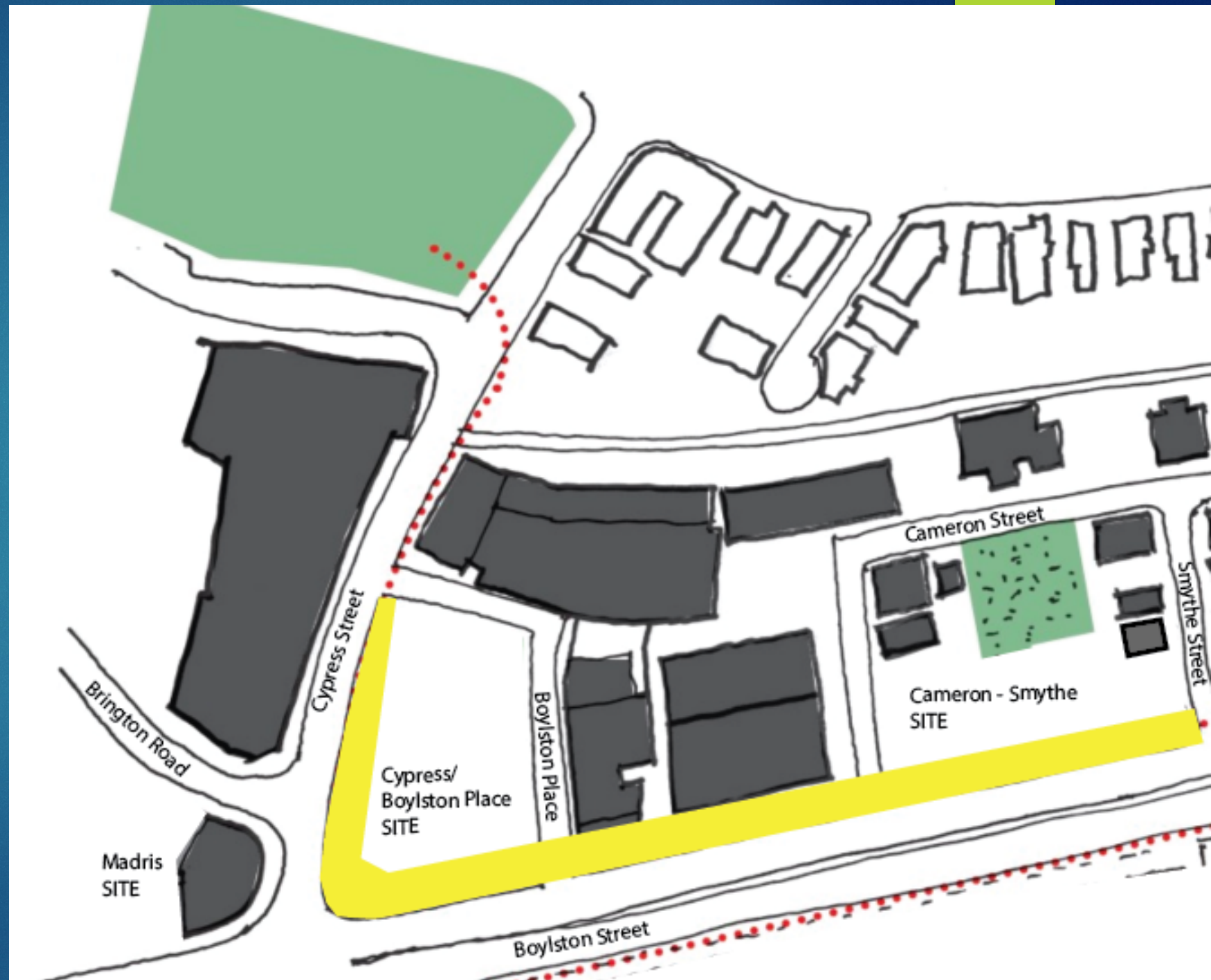
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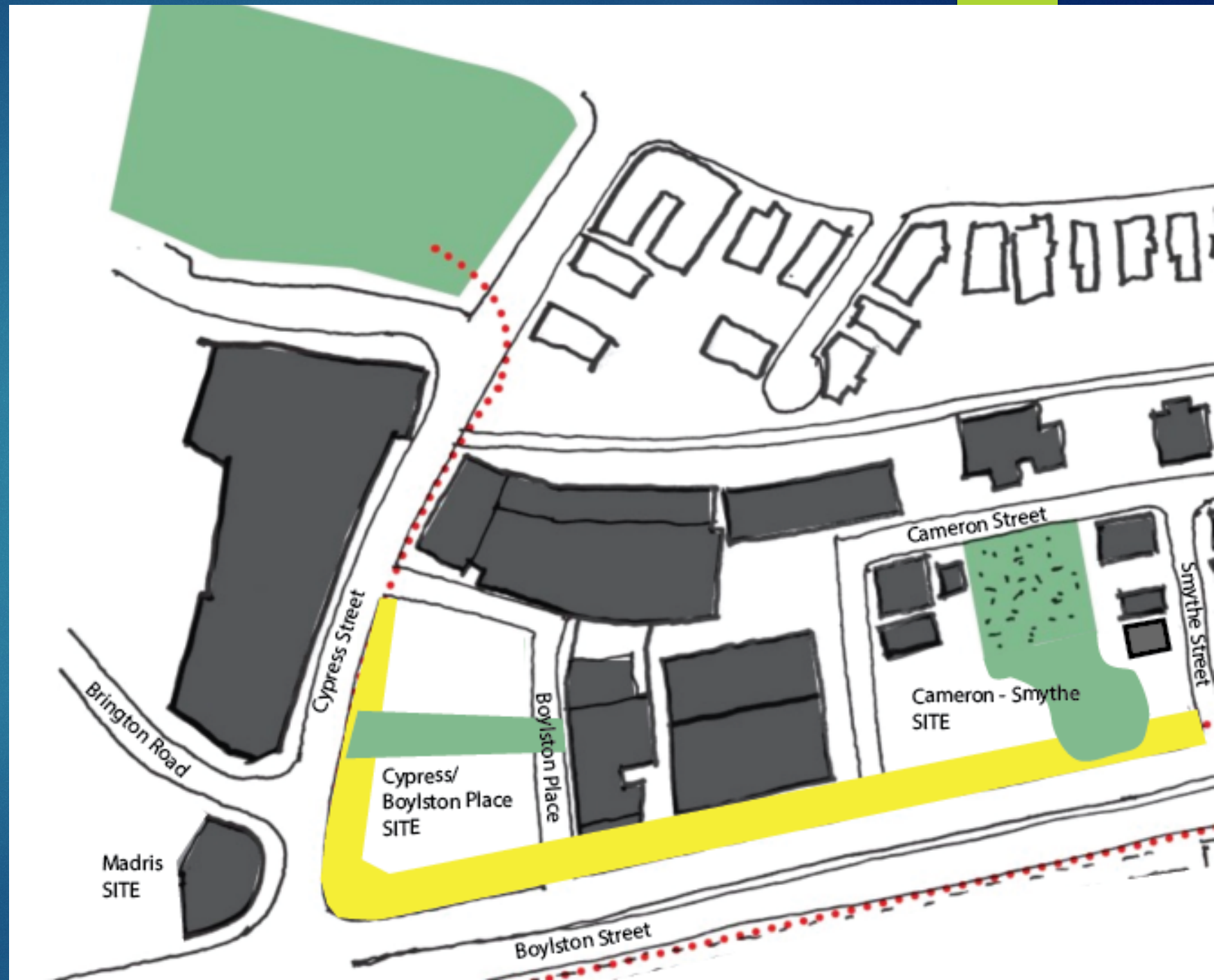
Madris Site to Smythe St.

- Significant setbacks (up to 25' from curb) along Cypress & Boylston Street east of Cypress



Madris Site to Smythe St.

- ▶ Significant setbacks (up to 25' from curb) along Cypress & Boylston Street east of Cypress
- ▶ View corridor west to Cypress
- ▶ Open space expansion from Cameron to Boylston

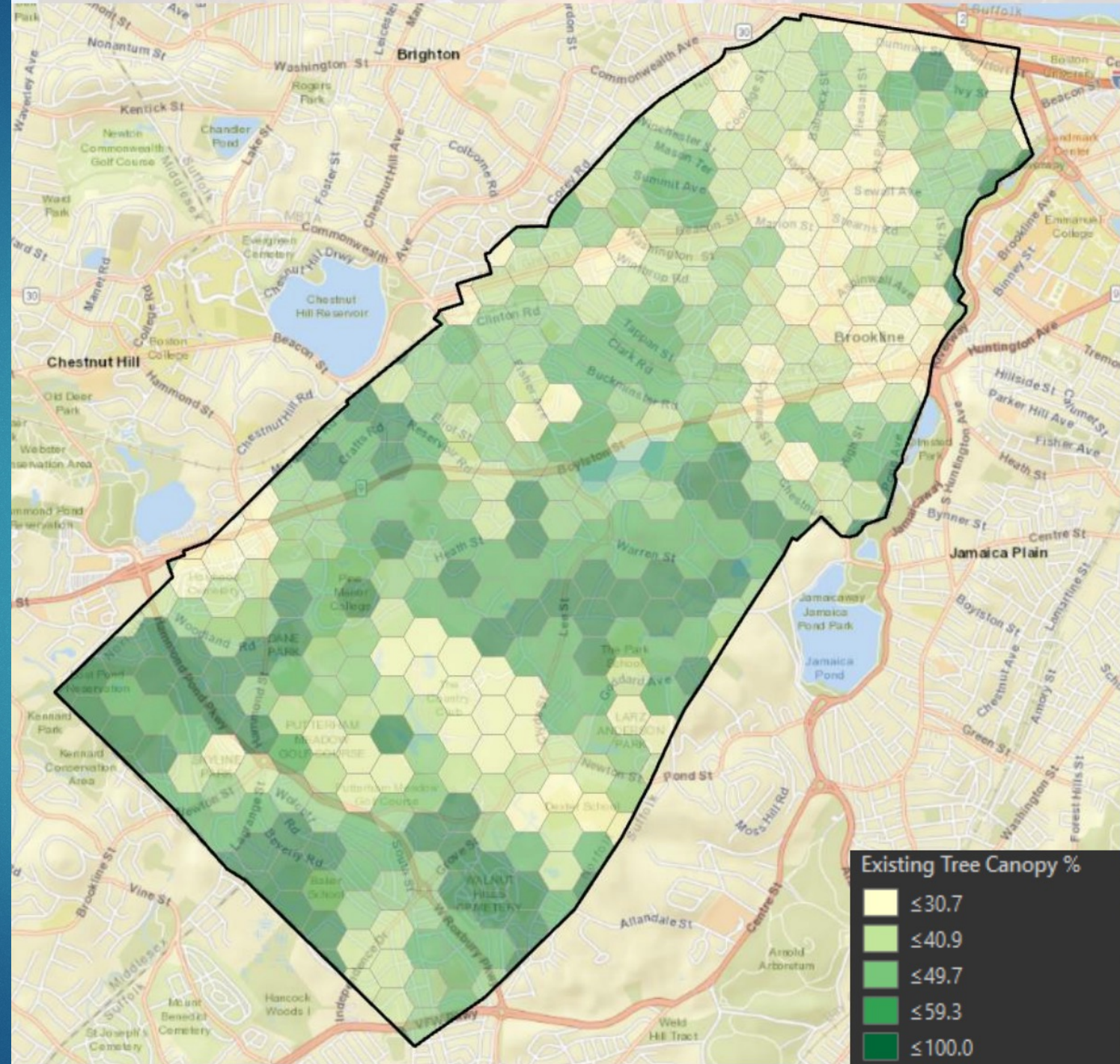


Height transitions for Madris site to Smythe St.

- ▶ Maximum height of roofline set by Madris building & 323 Boylston Street condos, transitioning to lower heights or combination of heights and setbacks of upper floors towards existing residential buildings
- ▶ 3D modeling of entire corridor is underway so that Committee can analyze different massing scenarios further (visual analysis, shadow studies, etc.)

Transform Strategies (cont'd)

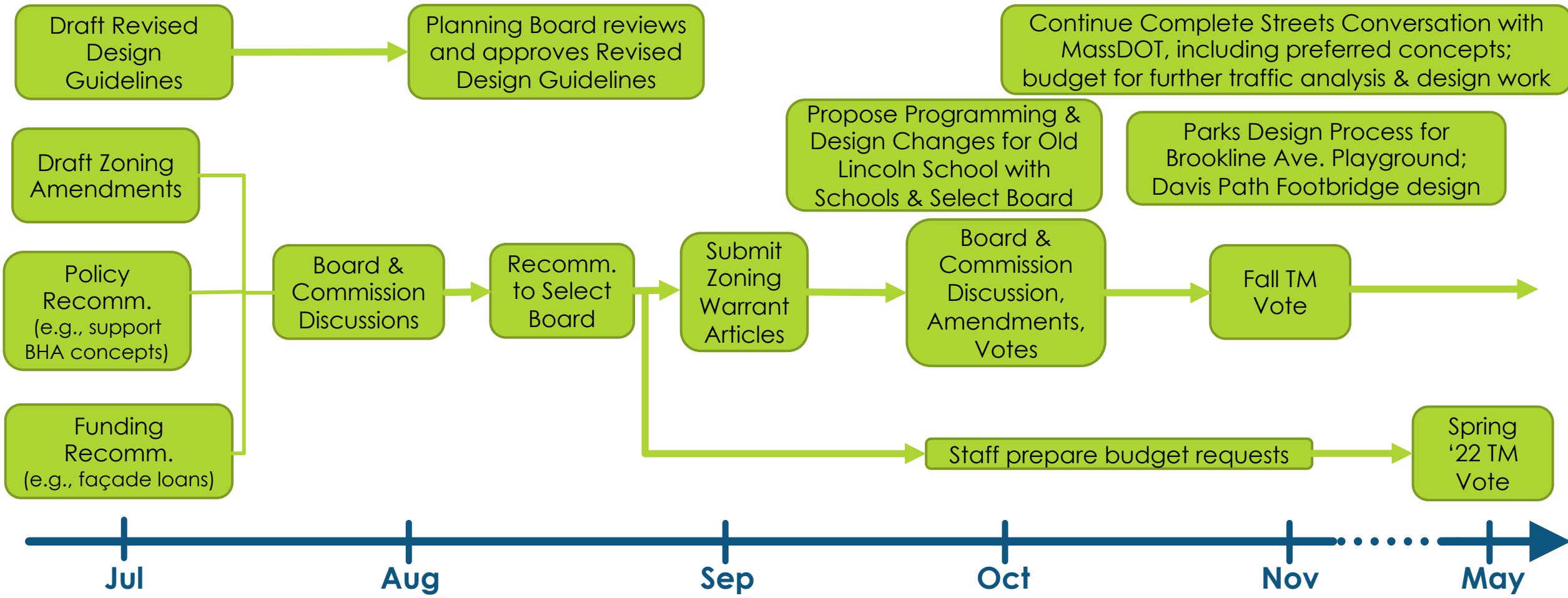
- ▶ Tree canopy standards for the entire Town, including this corridor, through the Urban Forestry Master Plan
- ▶ Affects outcome of private property tree canopy, not just street trees



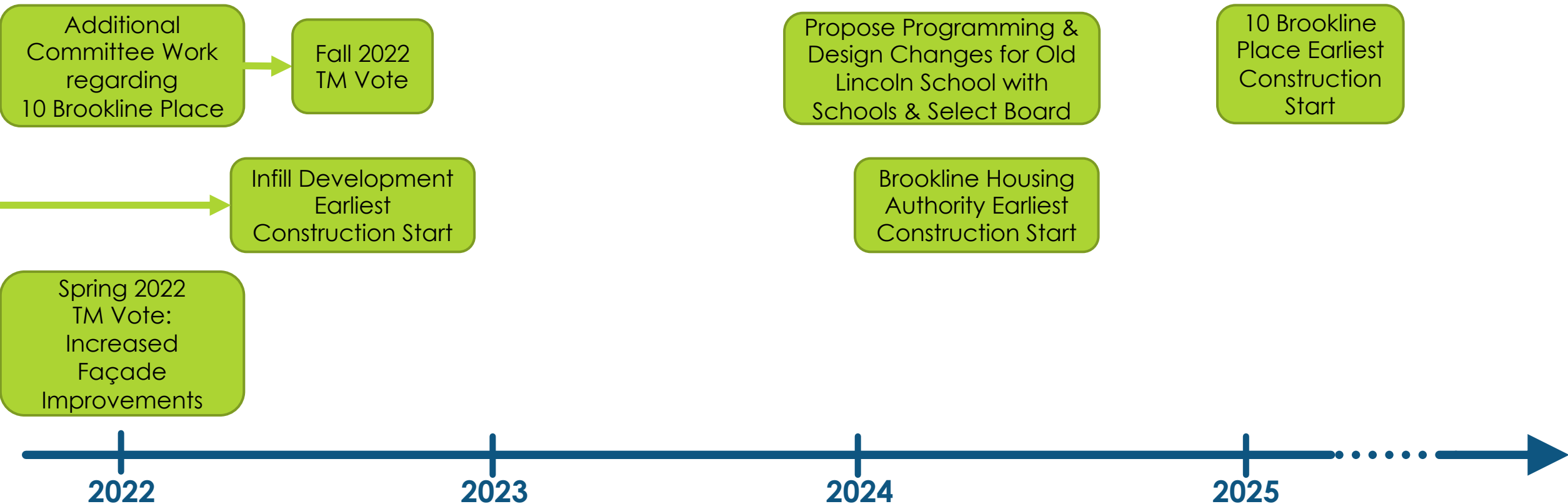
Pause for
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Implementation Timeline

Implementation Timeline



Implementation Timeline (continued)



Wrap-Up

What we need from you

- ▶ Feedback on Boylston Street complete streets concepts on June 9th
- ▶ Talk to your neighbors and organizations
- ▶ Let us know if you want to host a living room discussion or site walk – we can mail you a kit, attend live or virtually, etc.
- ▶ Sign up for notifications if you don't already get notices about Boylston Committee meetings
- ▶ Bring ideas to Committee meetings this summer; all meetings will continue to be recorded and posted